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CHILDREN AND RELIGION

Shall we teach our children religion? The question calls forth many different answers. Some parents are certain that their children should be taught religion from their earliest years. Other parents are definitely antagonistic. They feel that their children will learn about religion when they are themselves ready – some time in the future. But, perhaps, the majority of parents are neither greatly in favor of religious nurture nor greatly opposed to it. They simply do little about it.

And yet they are teaching their children religion. Whether or not they consciously teach ideas, attitudes, and habits which are called religious, their children are inevitably developing a fundamental attitude toward life, toward the universe in which they live, toward their fellow men and toward God. Such attitudes are, in their very nature, religious.

Outside of the home, too, there are factors which influence children's religious faith. Whether or not parents are giving their children any definite religious teaching, they can be sure that their children are learning from their own experiences a fundamental attitude toward God and toward their fellow man.

Whether they believe that God is all-powerful, working for good, or whether they believe He is indifferent or powerless, whether they believe that love and goodwill or that self-interest and greed should determine one's attitude toward his fellow man, whether they believe that the test of the great man is service and goodness and the ability to create beauty, or whether they believe that the test of a great man is power and wealth and the ability to bend others to his own will – parents need to provide guidance to their children in matters such as these.

It seems strange that parents who are so eager and earnest about the physical and mental growth of their children should so often appear to be indifferent about their religious faith. The matter cannot be put off until some later date, like the study of

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When you feel there is no hope,
When with life you cannot cope,
God will help you along the way –
Pause a moment, just to pray.

BLESSED NEW YEAR

The Church New Year starts on Sept. 1/14. In many ways, although the Civil Calendar has been changed to January 1, in reality, September is unofficially acknowledged as the beginning of the New Year. School starts, different "seasons" begin, classes and activities of all kind start their new year.

This day was often neglected in most parishes. At the present time, however, many have special services and activities planned. These stress that it should be the beginning of a new spiritual year for us. As the gospel for this day (Luke 4:16-22) says: "The eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him." We pray that on the first day of the New Year our eyes would turn and be fixed on Christ.

On the Civil New Year, January 1, we tend to wish for a "Happy New Year." All the traditions which go with this day point to a desire for a healthy, prosperous year. We are so caught up in these wishes that the spiritual life is forgotten. The Church New Year September 1/14 gives us this opportunity.

This observance is a Biblical one. We find that at the beginning of His adult life right after His Baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness to pray. Here he was tempted by the devil for forty days. When He came down from the mountain, He headed home to Nazareth. He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath Day and He was given the scroll to read from Isaiah. He read the following: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE

(Continued on Page 27, Col. 1)

THE BIRTH OF MARY

To be more accurate, the title should read "The Nativity of the Mother of God." This day, remembered on September 8/21, is the first Major Holy Day to be found on the Church Calendar, which starts on September 1/14. Why was this date selected as it is not to be found in the Bible? There are two reasons given for this and both are based on ancient tradition. Ancient tradition is not something pulled out "of the thin air," it is the continuation of something that has been done and believed by people from the time the event happened and references can be found in sermons and other writings. History shows that St. Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, built a church in Jerusalem which was dedicated to the Nativity of the Mother of God. It was said to be blessed on the date of her Nativity or September 8/21.

St. Romanus, who lived in 457, was a native of Syria and later a deacon of a church in Constantinople. He is known as the "Sweet Singer" and has written many prayers and hymns now in use in the Orthodox Church. He was probably the first one who brought this day to the attention of the church leaders. He wrote a hymn in honor of her birth and spread the knowledge of it among the people.

Both St. Andrew of Crete (740) and St. John Damascene also wrote much about this event. St. Andrew said: "This day is for us the beginning of all Holy Days. It is the door to kindness and truth. Today is arranged for the Creator of all an inspired Church, and the creation prepares itself to become the divine dwelling place of its Creator."

The tropar for the day continues our instruction concerning this event: "Thy birth heralded joy to the universe, for from Thee rose the Son of Justice, Christ our God."

As it is the first major Holy Day of the New Year, it sets the theme for the entire year: "God's inexpressible love for all of us, and our response to that love.

(Continued on Page 27, Col. 1)

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News CHRONOLOGY

SEPTEMBER 1996

DIED Fr. Lucian Grafton in Venice, FL
Fr. John Psinka in Campbell, OH
Fr. Protodeacon Roman Welsh in Chicago, IL

THE ANNUAL ORTHODOX TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM will be held from Oct. 17 through 20 at the Antiochian Village in Ligonier, PA. For info contact: Dr. John Boojamra, 4 Evergreen Place, Demarest, NJ 07627-2417.

A WAVE OF BAPTISMS took place in Bogota, Columbia just prior to June 6, the day many Columbians feared the Antichrist would appear. June 6 was the 6th day of the 6th month in a year ending in 6 which produces 6-6-6 feared as a sign of Satan. There were rumors that the Antichrist would put the "mark of the beast" on any child who had not been baptized. Archbishop Rubiana has ordered priests to forfeit any money they received for performing mass baptisms during the scare. It was astonishing to see so many toddlers being presented for baptism as we assumed most would have been baptized as infants.

THE CONGRESS OF RUSSIAN AMERICANS, PO Box 818, Nyack, NY 10960-0818 often receives requests from U.S. companies for persons who know the Russian language. If you are interested in such work, send a resume to the above address. They will forward requests of possible employment to you.

NAMED as head of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in America by Patriarch Bartholomew was Archbishop Spiridon. He was born in Warren, OH and has been serving as the bishop of a newly-formed diocese in Italy.

ANY CHURCH BOOKS PRINTED THIS YEAR will note that they were printed in the year 7504 since the creation of the world. It will also state that this is the 4th year of the 112 cycles (of 15 years).

GRANDPARENTS DAY IS September 8. What an opportunity for a "Heritage Day" in your parish.

AMONG THE 11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES in the U.S. are two which played a part in Russian history in this country. Wentworth-By-The-Sea Hotel in New Castle, NH was the site of negotiations that officially ended the RussO-Japanese War of 1904-05. Another is a building at Sutter Creek, CA, which the Russians sold just prior to the Gold Rush.

THIS PAST YEAR 7 Orthodox clergymen celebrated their 50th year of graduation from either St. Vladimir or St. Tikhon Seminaries. They are F. Kovalchuk, P. Shafran, B. Geeza, N. Fedorchak, D. Kudrikoff, I. Soroka, B. Stroyen. Graduating with them but now deceased are N. Kiryluk, N. Vansuch, M. Draovitch. Of these 10, 6 are sons of priest pioneers, 3 served as military chaplains, 1 is a bishop, 4 are still parish pastors, 9 claim roots in Pennsylvania, 2 publish international publications.

LUTHERAN BROTHERHOOD, an insurance company, is offering a plan called CharitAbility which guarantees steady church contributions for its policy holders at no increase in premiums, even as they collect disability. Literature says: "It allows Lutherans to continue to support their Lutheran congregations at a time when they can least afford it."

SOME PARISHES ARE ORDERING PACKETS of The Orthodox Herald to mail with their bulletins to those who have difficulty getting to church. Out-reach is necessary. We are all urged to "Go out and preach and teach." The mail helps do this.

CONGRATULATIONS on the 50th year of publication to One Church, 727 Miller St., Youngstown, OH 44502-2326 and to Fr. Feodor Kovalchuk, who has been its major writer and editor since its inception.

CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS are exempt from taxes. In return for this, they must negotiate a minefield of IRS-imposed rules regarding what they can say about politics. The rules can be broken when they endorse or oppose a candidate. The IRS recently sent out a news release explicitly outlining the rules for tax-exempt organizations.

WRITING PARISH HISTORY is a program to help those who will be writing histories among other things of their parishes for anniversary books or for the archives in their parish. Sponsored by the NJ Historical Records Commission, it will be held on Sept. 26 at Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. The cost is $25. Contact Prof. J.H. Mahoney, Dept. of History, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079-2696 by Sept. 15.

LIBRARIES are a tradition with Orthodox parishes. Still seen in many of the older parishes here and in Europe are extensive libraries which have books not only on church services and choir music but on the saints and other theological subjects. Most had a history section containing culture and ethnic books.

IN FLORIDA, the Holy Trinity Church has moved from St. Petersburg to 3266 State Road 580, Safety Harbor, FL 34695. Call 813-791-2273 for info on service schedule or becoming a member of the parish.

SAD NEWS FROM ESTONIA. There is only one woman's monastery in Estonia. People from all over the former Soviet Union made private pilgrimages there to drink from its spiritual well. At the present time, the Estonian government is hurriedly expelling all nuns who do not possess Estonian citizenship. This will start the death knell for the Phyti Convent (Monastery) in Pukhtitsa, where some of the nuns have prayed for at least half a century, which included most of their adult lives.

LITTLE BROTHERS - FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY is an organization of 6,500 volunteers who provide their friendship along with more tangible gifts - birthday meals, cakes, summer outings, flowers and most important human companionship to older people. The organization was founded 50 years ago by a Frenchman who delivered flowers as well as dinners to older neighbors left without families after World War II. For info about volunteering call Carisa Chappell at 312-786-0501 or your local office on aging (their number is in your local phone book) and ask for info on Little Brothers.

•Children and Religion

algebra. It cannot be left to the child's own choice after he grows older, like the field of his major study in college. It is something that is developing day by day, and is being woven into his everyday experiences. Parents cannot stop it; but they can have a large influence in directing its growth.

•Blessed New Year

LORD."

Then Jesus closed the scroll and sat down and He said to them that today the Scripture is fulfilled in their hearing. He noted that the Lord had sent Him to proclaim the ACCEPTABLE year of the Lord. The time had come for Him to set in motion a new way of life for us all. He formally began His ministry.

Let this Church New Year be one of growth for us and one in which we will be found to be doing the work of the Lord as we strive to improve ourselves spiritually.

•The Birth of Mary

Mary was born to Joachim and Anna in the year of their 50th wedding anniversary. They had prayed all of their married life for a child as they endured much embarrassment, snubs and gossip because of their childlessness. In that day it was believed that a couple was childless because one or both of them had sinned in some way. It was so bad that even a large donation which Joachim had sent to a synagogue was returned to him.

Mary's birth, like that of her Son, was prophesized in the Old Testament. This is depicted in the 4th row of the iconastas where her ikon is flanked on both sides by ikons of these Old Testament prophets.

Joachim and Anna, her parents, are remembered on September 9/22.

Let's go back to the tropar. Does her birth give you joy? Do you allow Christ to be manifest in your life with others in faith, hope and love? This is the real joy as a Church that Christ is glorified and God is acknowledged for His many blessings to us.

MISSION FUND

Copies of "the Herald" are sent to places other than Alaska to do Mission work. Helping are Mary Ann Perry, Mary Kaminsky, Anne Macko, Matushka Patricia Welsh, Larissa Kondratick, Jeanette Germain, Olga Peck. Russian Orthodox Catholic Women's Mutual Aid Society. Elizabeth Patnychuk in memory of her father-in-law Harry, who died on August 8, 1973. In memory of George "Kirk" Karas by the Stroyens.

KALUGA ICON



One hundred miles south of Moscow is the city of Kaluga. Near it we find the village of Tinkov, where in 1748 an ikon of the Mother of God depicted on cloth was found by accident in a storage room in the home of the Boyar Khitrov. It differs from most icons because it depicts the Virgin without the Christ Child. Instead, she is holding a book from which she appears to be reading. She is dressed as a nun and several sources state that this is an Umeleyene icon (Beeseching) as she seems to be asking (beseeching) for something in prayer.

Many miracles occurred to people who prayed in its presence. These miracles are substantiated and recorded in the Cathedral in Kaluga.

The first one is the complete restoration of health to a young servant in the Khitrov household. She denigrated the icon and became completely paralyzed. That night the Virgin came to her parents in a vision. They heard her say: "My image which has been depicted on the cloth has been desecrated by your daughter. Call a priest and pray with him. Sprinkle your daughter with Holy Water and she will be healed." The parents hurried to the church in the early morning and told the priest what had happened. He went with them to their home and they fulfilled the instructions of the Mother of God. The daughter was completely healed.

Among others who were cured of illness was Eudoxia, the daughter of the Boyar Khitrov. Following this the icon was taken to the church in Kalushke, near Tinkov, which had no church, and placed in the church of Nativity of the Mother of God. It was still here and greatly venerated at the beginning of this century.

In 1771, a great plague struck the area around Kaluga. Many people died. In desperation, the survivors went to Kalushke and prayed before the icon that the area be rid of this plague. Their prayers were answered. In memory of this the icon was designated as Wonder-working. After three days of fasting and prayer, the icon was carried around the town so that all the inhabitants, even the housebound sick, could pray before it for God's mercy. The date was Sept. 2/15, 1771.

In 1812, the area was again in panic. The French were approaching. Prayers were said non-stop in the presence of the ikon, and Kaluga was spared. The French turned away on Oct. 12/25, 1812.

On both of these days, the icon is taken from the church and taken in procession around the towns where the miracles occurred.

In the years since 1771, there have been reported many visions of the Mother of God in this area. She appears in the heavens surrounded by the heavenly hosts.

I could not find any more information on this icon. It would be interesting to know, why she was depicted holding a book and why it was painted on cloth.

ETHNIC CHUCKLE

Dorohaya Tyotya Mareea,

Slava Isusu Hristu from our house to yours.

Ohne call me Druha Hanya. Yah geew'-ka vashho bratha Mike. Me cousin, Hanya, long time peesha doh vas ee ohna dala me vash address. Ohna ee yah budem peesatee van.

Yah sobee sitting a dumam - you know teper everywhere you go in Amerikee you hear "fixed income." Yah sobee tinkyuyu shto not so different yah beela na fixed income all my life a moya krayanka, Liz kazeh, mee too, ali teper fixed income ma nice ring. Me stari worked in a factory a payda beela every two weeks. Noh it wasn't fashionable yet to be nah fixed income ee yah neznala yak handling tot situation.

Noh teper yah smarter. Fixed income yah nashlah dobree word. Taka nice lady came to my door and tried to sell me magazines. Yah kazuh, I'm sorry, yah nah fixed income. Ah ona kaze, I'm so sorry. Have a nice day. See before, I would have had to buy the magazines. Boh yah couldn't say - yah can't afford it. So I would buy and got stuck for something I couldn't afford and didn't read anyway. Teper yah get apology for bothering me boh yah na fixed income.

Yah kazuh this much za nash government. Ohnee takee smart. Dale name fixed income, takee novee term, ee shitko is Okay.

Z'Bohom,
Druha Hanya

* * * * * *

TRUTH

All too often we assume that God has put the Church here to serve us, to build us up, to make us greater, and so we go to Church to get something for ourselves. Not at all: God has put the Church here, and called us into the Church, so that we may worship and serve Him.

STAFF

Words change. Sometimes they get a different definition and at other times an obscure meaning becomes popular. In studying Mark 6: 7-13, we read: "He commanded them, that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only..."

The word staff is such a word. When reading this verse most people would visualize a long pole. Others would visualize - the staff as portrayed in the cut (depicted below).

The staff is important not only in its Biblical use but also in its usage in the church today.

First, in Biblical times, the staff was an indispensible article for the Jewish male. He carried it at all times and used it for many purposes. He leaned on it when he was tired, he used it for protection, as a weapon and to flog if necessary. Most of us are familiar with Psalm 23 where we pray: "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me," which tells us that God will protect us with His staff as the shepherd protects his sheep.

The owner of a household also carried a staff but it was decorated somewhat to show that he was more important. This led to the use of staffs called scepters, which were carried as the symbol of royalty or other official position and in this context is mentioned often in the Old Testament.

In the church today we see bishops carry a staff. The one they carry in non-liturgical occasions is usually a straight pole which may have a metal top. The one they carry during church services is more elaborate. It has a double crook near the top which is surmounted by a cross. Sometimes the double crooks are in the shape of serpent heads. A beautiful piece of cloth, usually silk, is tied to the staff just below the crooks. In practical terms it makes it more pleasant to the hand to hold the staff and does protect its finish.

The bishop is given the staff which is called a Zhezel in Slavonic or Paterissa in Greek at the end of the Consecration Service. With it the presiding bishop gives him the following instructions: "Receive this pastoral staff, that you feed the flock of Christ which is entrusted to you: and be a staff and support to those who are obedient. But lead the disobedient and the wayward to the correct way, to gentleness, and to obedience; and they shall continue in due submission."

The bishop is not the only one who is authorized to carry the staff during services. This is also given to archimandrites and abbots as a token of their spiritual authority over the monastery.

The reason for the serpents varies. One tells us that it is symbolic of the brazen serpent, which is given in John 10:14: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Another reason is that as the serpent casts off its old skin each year and forces its way through thorny paths to help accomplish this, so the bishop must guide his flock himself and lead his flock along the path of renovation in spite of sorrows and sufferings that this must take. As we are told in Matthew 10:16: "Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Wise as serpents that they may not be unnecessarily wounded spiritually, and harmless as doves that they not retaliate against those who have wronged them.

The bishop carries the staff as a symbol of his pastoral service and as a reminder to him and others that he is the shepherd of Christ's flock and should take care of it as a father takes care of his children.

The word staff, what does it bring to your mind?



HOW MUCH DID HE LEAVE?

Someone inquired about a person who recently died. How much did he leave?

"He left it all. He did not take any of it with him" was the answer.

None of us will. What we have is lent to us. We are a stewart of it, manager of it, and accountant for it, an agent for another. It is not permanently ours because we are not here permanently.

Dabs of Thoughts

A farmer was known for his generous giving, but his friends could not understand how he could give so much away and yet remain so prosperous. One day a spokesman for his friends said: "We cannot understand you. You give more than the rest of us and yet you always seem to have more to give." "Oh, that is easy to explain," the farmer said: "I keep shoveling into God's bin and God keeps shoveling into mine, but God has the bigger shovel."

A bishop cannot make rulings which break Orthodox laws. When a problem is referred to him, he can only make a decision on his interpretation of the law much like the Supreme Court in the U.S.

True worship is essential if we wish to bring others to Christ. True worship will produce a concern for unsaved people. True worship drives one to lead others to Christ. True worship is more than sitting down and being passive and quiet; worship is to be expressed through reaching out to others. True worship leads all church members to witness daily.

Augustine is not a saint in the Orthodox Church. He is known as Blessed Augustine not St. Augustine.

Women and laymen are allowed to be present in the altar when the altar table is being prepared for consecration. They leave with the clergy when they go to get the chalice and other ecclesiastical items from where they have been kept in the previous church building. The women and laymen do not re-enter the altar.

Make every effort to keep the roots alive, for if you don't everything is gone.

What a change! We read an ad in the newspaper which said: "Go to Atlantic City for the blessing of the water and mass, following which you can go to the casino!" Was it so long ago that parishes arranged for pilgrimages and attendance at other parishes for special days? Now too many parishes spend more time making arrangements for trips to casinos, bingo games and floor shows.

The altar table in Slavonic uses the same word as do the Greeks – trapeza. The word is much more meaningful as it also means bank in Greek. A place to be fed or nourished.



EDITORS' NOTES

We will be circling the Carpathian Mountains this September, where the harvest will be at its height. Almost all the populace will be out in the gardens which surround the cities, digging potatoes for the winter. The young people will be climbing the trees which line the roads, and with a few shakes they will knock down the nuts, which they will bag and carry home, usually on the handlebars of their bikes.

Here in the Poconos where we live, autumn comes a few weeks before that in Carpathia. The trees are changing color and the acorns start to fall. On the road we see hickory and other nuts, but no one bothers to pick them. We note the difference in living standards by this observation.

In following months, we will have some comments about our tour of the former Franz Josef (Austria-Hungary) lands. So many of you write or call us to tell us that you look forward to our articles. They renew the memory of you who have been there in previous years and inform those who have not and cannot make the trip for some reason.

We wish to thank all of you who are sending us new and old, used prayer books. We pass them on. The well worn ones have a prayer said for their previous owner, as we open the books, they turn to pages which have favorite prayers. It is interesting to find that the books from the beginning of this century are published by either Orthodox or Greek Catholic. Please continue to send the books to us.

Now we are looking for embroidery thread. Perhaps it could be a project of a women's group or the perohi makers, to collect embroidery thread that is lying around which will not be used because someone's eyes have gone bad and they can no longer see to sew, or else they have given up crafts as TV and other interests have surfaced. We will send the thread to the women's monastery in Mukachevo and another one nearby which was returned to the church a few years ago. The buildings are in sad shape and must be rehabilitated. We already send medical supplies, material, clothing, etc. and will include the thread with our packages in the future.

We are studying, with great interest, the return of the Byzantine and Eastern Catholic Churches to the traditions of the ancient church, when the Orthodox Church and they were one. We find it ironic that with their return to the rich tradition, we, Orthodox, especially in this country, are discarding or neglecting so much. As one modern saint said: "Individual priests are taking liberties with the traditions and services which a whole body of clergy were reluctant to alter even after much discussion and prayer." A frightening thought!

Classes about religion and Bible studies are starting this month. Have you ordered your packet of The Orthodox Herald to distribute?

God Be With You.

The Stroyens

WINTER'S GRACE

Someone wanted to share these few paragraphs called "Old Folks Are Worth A Fortune!" It's funny and so true.

Old folks are worth a fortune: With silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet and gas in their stomachs.

I have become a lot more social with the passing of the years. Some might even call me a frivolous old gal. You see, I'm seeing five gentlemen every day.

As soon as I wake up, Will Power helps me get out of bed. Then I go to see John. Then Charley Horse comes along, and when he is here, he takes a lot of my time and attention. When he finally leaves, Arthur Ritis shows up and stays the rest of the day. (He doesn't like to stay in one place very long, so he goes from joint to joint taking me along.) After such a busy, exhausting day, I'm really tired and glad to go to bed with Ben Gay. What a life!

P.S. The preacher came to call the other day. He told me that at my age I should be thinking about the hereafter. I told him that I do – all the time. No matter where I am – in the parlor, in the kitchen or down in the basement – I ask myself: "Now, what am I here after?"

* * * * * *

Pats on the back are nice, but shoves are better.

PRESS FUND

Thank you all who are helping us to keep printing. Summer is always a low season, so we have a special "Spasebo" for you taking time out of your schedules and writing to us. Mark Smerekanich, Mary Ann Perry, Dr. Michael Taptykoff, Margaret Bentz, Anne Macko, Albert and Olga Gessner, Helen Cudlic, Edward Kirpolenko, Mary Superata, Mr. and Mrs. Anatole Portnoff, Adamandia Baumgarten, Serge Taptykoff, Anna Sofelkanik, Dorothy Demianovich, Helen Dopsovic, Mary Kaminsky, Walter Lezinsky, Margaret Dolchok, Irene Allen, Helen Karpiak, Mary Kochmaruk, Mary Oyler, Connie Morgan, Larissa Kondratick, Phil Tamoush, Irene Allen, Andy Clements, Peter Holowatch, George Petrowsky, The members of the Russian Orthodox Catholic Women's Mutual Aid Society. Mary Carmack prayers for her service buddy Theresa Ida Matcko. Theodore Hamilla in memory of parents, Anna and John, Sr. and brothers John, Jr. and Michael. Best wishes to Andrew and Helen Toroney on their 50th wedding anniversary (June 16). Helen Cudlic in memory of Helen Philaopovich.

START EARLY

According to research on the development of children's brains, the optimum window of opportunity for learning lasts from birth to about 10 years of age. Children's brains gobble up glucose at twice the adult rate from the age of 4 to puberty. Young brains are primed to process new and complex information. Complex subjects such as geometry, foreign languages, and theology shouldn't wait until puberty to be introduced.

Very often youth workers, church school teachers, and even priests argue that programs for children should not be too religious because children are too young to handle such information. This couldn't be further from the truth. Children's minds thrive during worship services and active service projects and lessons. The key, however, is to not limit children in a dry classroom setting, but to keep them active. Music and exercise are very important in learning. Music trains the brain for higher forms of thinking, and exercise feeds nutrients to the brain and increases nerve connections.

Don't wait for children to become teenagers or young adults. Involve them in worship services from their earliest years. Teach them Orthodox theology by involving them in active projects utilizing music and physical activity. People can continue to learn during their whole lives, but when it comes to learning the Orthodox faith, childhood is the golden opportunity.



As the weather gets cooler, we think more about a hot cup of soup. I usually have a container of soup in the refrigerator, but occasionally I don't make a batch and I have to make something speedy. I turn to this recipe for Butter Bean Soup. It makes enough for one meal for two people. It is delicious and almost as fast as opening a can of soup.

BUTTER BEAN SOUP

1 can (15 oz.) or 2 cups butter beans
1 can (1 lb.) stewed tomatoes
3 Tbls. butter
1 Tbls. instant onion or 2 Tbls. finely chopped fresh
1 1/2 teas. sugar
1/4 teas. seasoned salt
dash pepper

Combine all in heavy saucepan. Simmer for 20 minutes.

Suggestions: This is a good basic recipe. I have added a can of tomato soup and a bit more of everything. You may want to add a bit of water to the basic recipe. My friend makes this with other types of beans and likes it. Let me hear about your experiences.

CHUCKLE

Many a person has gotten into trouble by not expressing himself well. There's a world of difference between "You look like the breath of spring" and "you look like the end of a hard winter."

ALASKA FUND

Helping send copies to Alaska are Mary Kaminsky, Helen Percy, Anne Macko, Nita Harris Siciliano, Mary Superata. Donald Stevens in memory of beloved uncle Nicholas W. Sudia.

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SEPTEMBER 1996

1 Matt 21:33-42
2 Mark 4:10-23
3 Mark 4:24-34
4 Mark 4:35-41
5 Mark 5:1-20
6 **Mark 5:24-24; 35-6:1 - Sunday**
7 Matt 10:27-11:1
8 John 3:13-17
9 Mark 5:24-34
10 Mark 6:1-7
11 Mark 6:7-13
12 Mark 6:30-45
13 **Mark 6:45-53 - Sunday**
14 Matt 21:33-42
15 Matt 22:35-46
16 Luke 3:19-22
17 Luke 3:23-4:1
18 Luke 4:1-15
19 Luke 4:16-22
20 **Luke 4:22-30 - Sunday**
21 Luke 4:31-36
22 Luke 5:1-11
23 Luke 1:5-25
24 Luke 21:12-19
25 Luke 5:33-39
26 Luke 6:12-19
27 **Luke 6:17-23 - Sunday**
28 Luke 5:17-26
29 Luke 6:31-36
30 Luke 6:24-30
1/14 Orthodox Church New Year

BIBLE STUDY

The reading from Mark 6:7-13 is significant because it gives instructions to the Apostles who are going out for the first time to preach the Lord's Gospel. These instructions are also given in Matthew 10:1-15 and Luke 9:1-5. In Matthew's Gospel they are told to go forth "two by two," and they are named in pairs.

In verse 12 and 13 we are told how they went about their mission. "They went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many devils, and also anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them."

This is the first time they performed miracles. How magnificently the life-giving power of the Spirit revealed itself in the ministry of the Apostles! The radiance of their faith and the genuine warmth of their compassion were lightning rods that "grounded" the grace of God so that it satisfied the needs of God's people and encouraged the growth of their own faith as well.

How strongly, I ask myself, do I believe that the Spirit lives as vibrantly in me? Do I act as if I knew Christ was ministering through my touch, my speech, my service to others?

No less than to Peter or Paul the Apostles, my listening, loving presence to another person in time of grief or trial calls down an anointing of peace and fortitude on both of us. In fact, as I listen to how a person has struggled with a difficulty, some aspect of their experience usually gives me an insight about how to live with a loss or hardship of my own.

May each of us be graced with the awareness that God is with us, and may that assurance fill us with joy and courage as this awareness becomes more evident in and through our presence to others.



THE EIGHT-BAR CROSS

The cross is the most prominent Christian symbol. When St. Constantine was the Emperor of the Roman Empire, he replaced the symbolic eagles of Caesar on his banners with the cross of Christ. This symbol became the standard of Christian faiths all over the world.

The eight-branched cross found primarily in those of Slavic tradition (Russian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Serbian)is often referred to as the "Orthodox Cross." It is distinctive and people often ask the meaning for the extra bars.

One could give a catechetical lesson on the symbolism of this cross. In Russian Orthodox literature we find that missionaries erected a three-bar cross on the intersections and when a group gathered they began to preach about Christ and how one would get salvation through Him. When asked why Christ was crucified, they would add the shorter top bar to show why He was accused. According to Matthew 27:37 it read: "This is Jesus. The King of the Jews." Those that crucified Him did not recognize Him as the Saviour but as a political leader. This is why He was condemned to die on the cross. The words on this top bar were written in three languages – Greek, Latin, and Hebrew – so that all could understand them.

Then to teach about repentance, the missionaries would add the slanted bar on the bottom. They would tell about the repentance of the thief who went to heaven, this was represented by that side of the bar pointing upward. Then they would tell about the thief who did not repent and was condemned. The bar on that side pointed down. That is why the bottom bar is slanted.

The Orthodox Cross, with its inscription bar at the top and the added slanted footbar near the bottom, more fully symbolizes the crucifixion than the more common four-sided cross.

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A smile is a curve that can set a lot of things straight.